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ABSTRACT

The most important feature of this 2-year elementary teacher education program, begun in 1966, is the earlier and more direct exposure it offers to inner-city education. To take place before student teaching, it provides for 2 days per week to be spent at one of 12 local cooperating elementary schools, studying teaching methods in specific academic areas in the school setting under a Temple University professor and then practicing these methods in the classroom. Students are admitted to the program on a voluntary basis, with a choice being offered between the conventional campus-based courses or the EPICT school-centered courses. Advantages of the program in the eyes of the involved Temple faculty are that it is more realistic, provides a source of immediate feedback for the instructor, permits opportunity to work firsthand with children, and is a natural setting for investigation and research. Evaluation of the program by students, faculty members, and school principals later using EPICT students as student teachers indicates that it has been successful in helping education students adjust to urban teaching. (RT)

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ELEMENTARY PROGRAM FOR INNER-CITY TEACHING

E P I C T

College of Education
Temple University
1969

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PART I

EPICT OVERVIEW

The Elementary Program for Inner City Teaching (EPICT) at Temple University is an approach to undergraduate elementary teacher preparation which has as its overall objective a relevant and realistic setting for the teaching of methods courses as well as earlier and more direct contact for students with children in the inner-city milieu. Since the majority of Temple University elementary education majors work in an inner-city school upon graduation, EPICT attempts to have a realistic and supportive entry for teaching in this setting.

The program design is patterned to fit into the existing schedule structure which characterizes a large urban university such as Temple. Students complete either a two year basic studies sequence or a junior college program before entry into professional education. The schedule for this senior college level program is built upon identifying two days (Tuesday and Thursday) which can be given to professional preparation. Deficient areas of basic studies and courses for academic minors can be elected on a Monday - Wednesday - Friday sequence.

Twelve elementary schools in the Temple University community serve as centers for the teaching of methods courses in the academic areas of Language Arts, Reading, Mathematics, Science and Social Studies Education. Each school provides an instructional room for the university professor and his group of approximately twenty-four undergraduates. The meetings are organized in three hour blocks and offered in the

mornings and afternoons of Tuesdays and Thursdays. A portion of the block is devoted to lecture. Students then spend time in cooperating classrooms and apply discussed content and techniques with groups of children. A concluding seminar completes the block with an evaluation of the classroom experiences and attempted linkage to the earlier lecture.

By the time students reach the point in their professional preparation for entry into student teaching they have already been exposed to a half dozen or more inner-city elementary schools and have worked intimately with at least as many groups of children teaching in a variety of academic areas. This early extensive exposure to schools and children increases the probability for success upon entry into the focus of all pre-service preparation -- student teaching.

PART II

EXPLANATION AND ANALYSIS

Description and Development

The Elementary Program for Inner-City Teaching was begun in September, 1966. At that time, called the Honors Program, 48 juniors were admitted. The number of undergraduates involved has increased to 200 -- half juniors and half seniors. Since there is little evidence that the good academic student becomes the "good teacher", a grade point average is no longer used in admitting students; all volunteers are admitted. Students majoring in elementary education at Temple have a choice between the "conventional" pattern of co-

on-campus methods courses preceding student teaching or the school-centered EPICT sections of the same courses to be followed by student teaching.

Program Objectives

While the objectives might be fractured into numerous defensible statements the over-all purpose remains that of giving an early realistic exposure to children in a setting which is as close to the teaching situation encountered at the point of student teaching.

Personnel Involved

The cooperating teachers at the twelve Temple community schools are offered tuition free courses as well as participation in work-shops at Temple during the semester. Principals receive renumeration for their work. Fourteen Temple faculty members teach their courses in the school settings. Each course receives regular university assigned faculty-load credit. Some faculty members have elected to teach an additional course for EPICT teachers at the school setting which follows a pattern of in-service or individualized directed study.

Budget

Since adoption as a portion of the regular undergraduate curriculum, EPICT now receives annual supplemental budgeting for the following areas: honoraria ($600) to be used for guest speakers when all EPICT students and staff meet three or four times as a group; luncheon meetings ($865) held monthy for cooperating EPICT school principals and faculty members to evaluate and plan; and, general supplies ($1,000) order by university faculty members to be utilized

at the schools with children. Arrangements with the Office of Instructional Services of the Philadelphia School District provides the supply budget for the purchase of materials for each school. This equipment and supplies remain in the school to be used by teachers in their classrooms. It is felt that this pattern will allow an introduction of new and supplemental materials to the schools.

Contribution To The Improvement of Teacher Education

While the involved Temple faculty acknowledges that teaching classes in school settings is more difficult, staff evaluation suggests that this approach to education has the following advantages: (1) is more realistic, (2) provides a source of immediate feedback for the instructor, (3) permits opportunity to work firsthand with children, (4) is a natural setting for investigation and research. In general, the university staff becomes more active in school settings, in planning conferences and in participating in faculty meeting sessions.

Evaluation

Final evaluations from students indicate that the program matches expectations for methods courses with high relevance. Faculty members report a continuing high motivation throughout each semester. Students returning as student teachers to EPICT schools are gauged by principals as "better prepared" and "less anxious" than those with the conventional pre-student teaching preparation. Since students who have had longer association with particular schools feel more comfortable and confident, they prefer permanent teaching jobs in these schools upon graduation. Commitment has been secured from the Director of Personnel of the Philadelphia School District to give placement priority

to EPICT students.

Questions have been directed towards the validity of this type of preparation if Temple were not to sit in the heart of a ghetto. What if Temple did not basically deal with an inner-city type of school? Would this then be a defensible approach to preparing teachers? Our answer to all questions of this nature has and will be that we feel this is a sound and relevant pattern to follow for all teacher preparation.